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**helping children
to build
reading skills**



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helping children to build reading skills

The ability to read and understand what is read is a key to educational success. As a parent, you can reinforce your child's learning by doing simple activities together. This booklet lists six categories of activities and has a section with pointers to help you work with your child. The last section is broken down by grade level suggesting types of books and authors you might provide for your child to read.

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This booklet was written by a committee of the Montana State Reading Task Force sponsored by my office. Special thanks to Grace Buchanan, Victor; Nancy Hammer, Hamilton; and Geneva Van Horn, University of Montana, for giving their time to prepare this publication.

Georgia Rice,
Superintendent

A faint, out-of-focus background image of a classical building, possibly a library or courthouse, featuring four prominent columns and a triangular pediment at the top.

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Dear Parent:

You have a greater impact on your child's life than anyone else. You have the advantage of being the first teacher, and you continue to have great influence throughout the years of learning.

Many of your child's attitudes are formed in imitation of your own feelings. In homes where reading and good conversation are stressed, children have an advantage. Even if you don't enjoy reading, let your child know that you value it. Reading is not only for instruction and information but also for entertainment and fulfillment. Reading can change lives.

In the daily pattern of your life there are many things you can do to help your child with reading. This booklet offers suggestions for various activities. Please use your own judgment in selecting items that best fit into your family schedule and are most appropriate for your child's needs and interests.

Sincerely,

"Parent Power" Committee
Montana State Reading Task Force
Office of Public Instruction

Grace Buchanan
Victor, Montana

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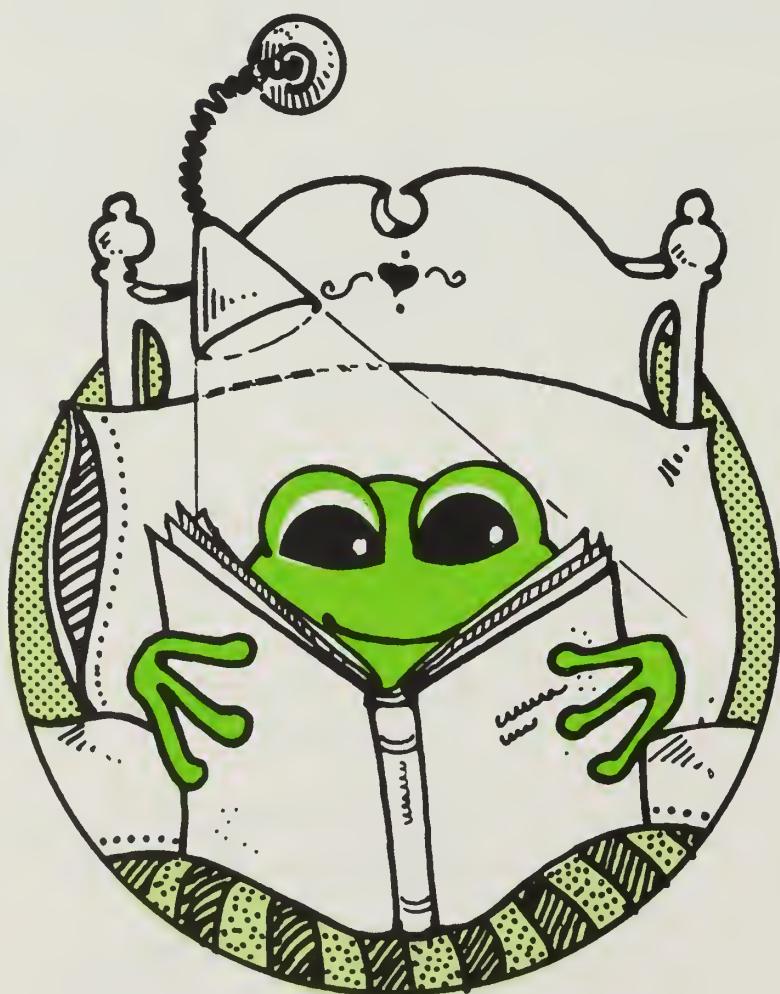
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family activities

Family relationships promote awareness and growth. As a parent you can

- Listen to your child read on a regular basis. Better yet, have family read-aloud-together times.
- Read orally to the child often—a news item, a short poem, a magazine article, a joke, a riddle, or a short story.
- Encourage your child to read at least twenty minutes daily and permit reading in bed.



- Give paperback and book gifts for birthdays and Christmas.
- Give a home subscription to a magazine your child has liked in the library—Ranger Rick, Cricket, Jack and Jill, Highlights, National Geographic World . . .

- Make good books and paperbacks easily accessible near favorite lounging areas in your home.
- Introduce topics for family conversation at the breakfast or dinner table that might lead your child to seek additional information through reading.
- Help the child to check for information in the almanac, the encyclopedia, the dictionary, or other source when a question arises that requires a factual answer.
- Share with the family comments about happenings reported in the newspaper.
- Help your child to look through the newspaper for weather news, TV schedules, or comics. Even the young child can pick out familiar letters or words in the newspaper or discuss pictures with you.
- View as a family and discuss suitable TV shows, particularly those that might encourage reading.
- Help your child to compare the literature on which a television show or movie is based with the show itself.
- Take your child to the library regularly. Better yet would be evening library trips with the whole family.
- Write frequent messages to your child. These can be instructions, praise for jobs well done, or just "fun" notes.
- Capitalize on any interest the child has by helping to find reading material that is not too difficult—bicycle care and repair, sports, or the history of the town or state, for example.
- Play mealtime games in which you ask each other what food on the table begins with the same sound as monkey, or which food rhymes with the word head, for example.
- Allow the child the experience of reading and ordering from cereal boxes as a means of evaluating advertising.

task-related activities

Working together provides excellent opportunities for practical application of reading skills. Take time to:

- Allow your child to help with meal preparation and to read recipes, directions for packaged foods, or labels on canned goods.
- Show how to use measuring cups and spoons and how to read appliance settings.
- Encourage the child to help with household chores and to read such things as instructions for laundry or cleaning products, laundering instructions on clothing labels, or directions for assembling various items.
- Promote understanding of reading in home maintenance by having the child read the pamphlets for care and operation of lawn mowers or household appliances, as well as directions on paint can labels, for instance.
- Invite your child to observe car care chores done at home and to read the label on the antifreeze jug or the oil filter box.
- Teach the child to take and write down telephone messages for other family members.
- Insist that your child read you the directions and cautions on the labels of any medication or vitamins being taken. Also urge the reading of instructions on cosmetic or hair care products.
- Encourage the seeking of information on pet and plant care.
- Choose clothing or gift items from catalogs with the child's help and show how to use the order blanks.
- Allow your child to help with menu planning and preparation of shopping lists through use of newspaper ads and recipe books.

community activities

Reading is used for interpreting and making decisions. As your child accompanies you on errands around town

- Call attention to billboards, street or traffic signs, and bumper stickers, as well as the names of familiar businesses.
- Teach the use of building or mall directories in locating particular offices or shops.
- Show how to find items at the grocery store by using the store directory or aisle markers.
- Make selections in the store with the child's help in reading labels, examining products, and comparing prices.
- Demonstrate to the child how you write checks or use credit cards or cash as you make purchases or pay bills, and show how you look over receipts or cash register slips.
- Point out gas and oil gauges and self-service or full-service pumps as you stop at the gas station, and let the child monitor the gauge on the pump.
- Assist your child in reading the menu at the restaurant or drive-in, and let the child help in looking over the check and determining the amount of tip.
- Show how you fill out the deposit or withdrawal slip at the bank, and let the child locate the correct desk or counter area for other banking business.
- Indicate signs on mail slots or counter areas at the post office, and explain package slips or box-rent due notices, as well as money order forms.



recreational activities

Even “fun times” can be used for organizing, planning and following directions. Encourage your child to:

- Plan trips by collecting and using travel folders, maps, graphs and charts.
- Keep a log or journal on your trip.
- Read while sunbathing, fishing, or on a picnic.
- Seek information about skiing, boating, backpacking, and other recreational activities.
- Play word games while traveling.
- Hunt for witty sayings on billboards and bumper stickers.
- Compare books with movies or television shows.
- Follow the rules for games-Battleship, Twist, Monopoly...
- Put together puzzles.
- Assemble models, craft kits, and toys by following directions.
- Take advantage of concerts, plays, museums, zoos and sporting events.
- Read to learn more about special interests and hobbies—stamp collecting, dolls of other lands, rocks, pictures of baseball stars...
- Become involved in individual sports that require coordination skills—table tennis, bowling, swimming, hiking, golf—because research indicates that physical coordination makes reading easier for children.
- Sight read new music.
- Apply for fishing and hunting licenses.

personal activities

Development and fulfillment as an individual requires reading skills. Give any needed assistance for your child to:

- Write letters and thank-you notes for friends and relatives.
- Use a dictionary with ease.
- Make greeting cards for Christmas and special occasions.
- Keep a diary.
- Complete applications for change of address, social security, passports and visas.
- Fill out mail orders.
- Invest in savings and checking accounts or bonds.
- Study "how to" manuals for vehicle maintenance, home improvements, and creative crafts.
- Learn how to care for pets and plants.
- Prepare for driver's examinations and take hunter's safety courses.
- Use scouting manuals and 4-H guides.
- Budget money for personal needs.
- Join a book club or subscribe to a magazine.
- Build a personal library of books or the more affordable paperbacks.
- Read books that deal with interests or emotions.
- Make scrapbooks.



homework activities

Good study habits begin at the home. Work with your child to:

- Choose a definite place for study that is free from interruptions.
- Equip a study area with good lighting and work materials close at hand.
- Make a time chart showing what activities occupy after-school hours and weekends in order to budget study time.
- Follow a plan that sets aside specific hours and days for studying. Include the order in which subjects will be handled. Big assignments need to be started well in advance of the due date and be worked on regularly.
- Set aside a routine time for study. *Do not vary from this plan.* Changes should be allowed only for unusual reasons. If no homework has been assigned, substitute other interesting activities to stimulate reading, writing and thinking skills.
- Set up an assignment notebook which logs each assignment exactly as the teacher has given it. Encourage your child to ask the teacher to explain any assignment not clearly understood. Cross out or check off each item as it is completed.
- Become familiar with the textbooks. The following are good techniques:
 1. Turn to the title page. Have your child indicate the author(s), the title, the publisher and, on the back of the title page, the copyright date.
 2. Read the preface. Find out how the book is organized. Discuss with your child the author's purpose and point of view.
 3. Examine the table of contents. Have the child tell you in his/her own words what the book covers.



4. Choose one chapter to examine with the child. Point out headings, introduction, chapter summary, and study questions. Also note special materials such as graphs, tables, and charts.
5. Refer to the glossary for help in understanding vocabulary words used in the book.
6. Employ the index to locate facts, names, and dates used in the book.

- Use a study procedure. A method which has proved successful for many is the SQ3R approach:
 1. **Survey.** Read the introductory statement, headings, pictures, graphs, chapter summary and questions to get a general idea of the chapter.
 2. **Question.** Restate headings into questions to give purpose for reading.
 3. **Read.** Answer the purpose and chapter questions.
 4. **Recite.** Answer each question orally to yourself.
 5. **Review.** Look back for needed information and make notes of important facts and conclusions.

points for parent power

- Be generous with praise. Make reading a pleasant experience rather than an obligation.
- Relax and enjoy reading times with your child. If either of you becomes tense, STOP.
- Do not demand that oral reading be perfect. If a word is omitted or substituted and it makes sense, accept it. Don't insist on rereading for every small error. When a word is unknown, simply tell the child the word.
- Sit close to the child and give your complete attention during reading time.
- Allow the child to read whatever is comfortable and of interest. Avoid criticizing literary taste but encourage as many types of reading material as possible. Be careful not to insist on books written at grade level.
- Let your child make his/her own selection by using the "Rule of Thumb." Turn to any page in the book. Hold up one hand and start reading. For every unknown word put down a finger, starting with the little one. If the thumb is reached while still on the same page, the book is too difficult to be read without help.
- Don't ask a child to finish a book or story he/she obviously does not like. Try something else.
- Avoid comparing your child to other children, especially brothers or sisters. A child's reading problems or other difficulties should only be discussed in confidence with professionals and not when the child is present.
- Show a positive attitude toward school. If you have criticisms of a teacher or the system, be careful not to air them in front of the child. Attempt to resolve such situations in a constructive manner.



primary grades

**By the time my child has finished
the primary grades, he/she has enjoyed:**

- artistic Caldecott Award winning books
- wordless picture books
- alphabet books
- counting books
- Mother Goose, nursery rhyme, and poetry books
- animal and adventure stories
- folk tales, fairy tales, and fables
- information books on personal interests

He/she has read books by authors listed below:

<input type="checkbox"/> Aardema, Vern	<input type="checkbox"/> Lionni, Leo
<input type="checkbox"/> Birmingham, John	<input type="checkbox"/> Mayer, Mercer
<input type="checkbox"/> Carle, Eric	<input type="checkbox"/> Munari, Bruno
<input type="checkbox"/> Cooney, Barbara	<input type="checkbox"/> Tresselt, Alvin
<input type="checkbox"/> Emberley, Ed	<input type="checkbox"/> Schulevitz, Uri
<input type="checkbox"/> Fisher, Aileen	<input type="checkbox"/> Viorst, Judith
<input type="checkbox"/> Freschett, Berniece	<input type="checkbox"/> Ward, Lynd
<input type="checkbox"/> Galdone, Paul	<input type="checkbox"/> Wildsmith, Brian
<input type="checkbox"/> Goudy, Alice	<input type="checkbox"/> Yashima, Taro
<input type="checkbox"/> Hoban, Tana	<input type="checkbox"/> Zolotow, Charlotte
<input type="checkbox"/> Jeffers, Susan	

Other authors he/she especially likes are:

intermediate grades

By the time my child has finished the intermediate grades, he/she has read daily, attempting to balance literature reading among fiction and non-fiction and including such categories as:

- _____ adventure stories
- _____ animal stories
- _____ humorous works
- _____ historic fiction
- _____ realistic fiction
- _____ folk tales, tall tales, myths, and legends
- _____ fantasy and science fiction
- _____ biography
- _____ information books relating to needs and interests

Among the authors he/she read are those below:

_____ Alexander, Lloyd	_____ Kerr, Judith
_____ Carrick, Carol	_____ Lawson, Robert
_____ Chase, Richard	_____ McDermott, Gerald
_____ Cleary, Beverly	_____ O'Dell, Scott
_____ Cleaver, Vera & Bill	_____ Paterson, Kathryn
_____ Fitzhugh, Louise	_____ Picard, Barbara
_____ Fleischman, Sid	_____ Rounds, Glen
_____ Fox, Paula	_____ Singer, Isaac
_____ Fritz, Jean	_____ Sperry, Armstrong
_____ Haviland, Virginia	_____ White, E.B.
_____ Henry, Marguerite	

Other authors he/she especially likes are:

upper grades

By the time my child has finished the upper grades, he/she reads daily, consciously balancing literature reading among fiction and non-fiction and including such categories as:

- _____ modern fantasy
- _____ realistic fiction
- _____ historical fiction
- _____ science fiction
- _____ myths, legends, and tall tales
- _____ adventure stories
- _____ animal stories
- _____ many Newbery and Newbery literary honor books
- _____ poetry
- _____ humorous works
- _____ biography
- _____ information books relating to needs and interests

Among the authors he/she reads are those listed below:

_____ Blume, Judy	_____ LeGuin, Ursula
_____ Chute, Marchette	_____ Peck, Richard
_____ Cooper, Susan	_____ Speare, Elizabeth
_____ Daugherty, James	_____ Steele, William
_____ George, Jean	_____ Sutcliff, Rosemary
_____ Hamilton, Virginia	_____ Tolkein, John
_____ Hinton, S.E.	_____ Westall, Robert
_____ Hunt, Irene	_____ Wibberley, Leonard
_____ Kerr, M.E.	_____ Yep, Laurence
_____ Konigsburg, E.L.	_____ Zindel, Paul
_____ L'Engle, Madeleine	

Other authors he/she especially likes are:

inexpensive but useful guides for parents are:

1. *Why Read Aloud to Children? What is Reading Readiness? How Can I Encourage my Primary-Grade Child to Read? How Can I Get My Teenager to Read? How Can I Help My Child Learn to Read English as a Second Language?* (A series of pamphlets addressed to parents costing 50 cents per pamphlet.) International Reading Association, 800 Barksdale Road, Newark, DE 19711.
2. Lerrick, Nancy. *A Parent's Guide to Children's Reading.* Latest ed. Bantam Books, 666 Fifth Avenue, New York City 10019. \$1.95.
3. *Adventuring with Books: A Booklist for Pre-K—Grade 8.* Latest ed. National Council of Teachers of English, 1111 Kenyon Road, Urbana, Illinois 61801. \$3.95.

NOTES:



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Prepared by a committee of the
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